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UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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EXAMINER
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ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3694	

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	04/23/2007	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

PTOL-90A (Rev. 10/06)

	Application No.	Applicant(s)
Office Action Summary	10/008,254	AMERASINGHE ET AL.
	Examiner	**Art Unit**	
	Susanna M. Diaz	3694	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE <u>3</u> MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.
- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on <u>09 February 2007</u>.

2a)☒ This action is **FINAL**.   2b)☐ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1-3,5,6,12-17,19-21,28-30 and 45-50* is/are pending in the application.

    4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1-3,5,6,12-17,19-21,28-30 and 45-50* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

    Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

    Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

    a)☐ All   b)☐ Some *   c)☐ None of:

      1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

      2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

      3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

    * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1)☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2)☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3)☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
    Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

4)☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
    Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.

5)☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application

6)☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

1.   This final Office action is responsive to Applicant's amendment filed February 9,

2007.

Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 12-16, 19-21, 28-30, and 49 have been amended.

Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 12-17, 19-21, 28-30, and 45-50 are presented for examination.

Response to Amendment

2.   The previously pending claim objection and rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd

paragraph are withdrawn in response to Applicant's claim amendments.

Response to Arguments

3.   Applicant's arguments filed February 9, 2007 have been fully considered but they

are not persuasive.

On page 14 of Applicant's response, "Applicants respectfully submit that the

statements within the Office Action fail to establish or suggest that Sultan generates a

forecast series, which, as claimed, is distinct from generating a forecast." As

understood by the Examiner, a forecast series comprises the details of how a desired

forecast is to be performed. Since the users of Sultan specify the constraints that are to

be applied to a desired forecast, these users are providing enough direction to the

computer system and software such that the desired forecast is automatically generated

as per the users' wishes, which are effectively defined by the users' specified forecast

constraints in the equivalent of a "forecast series." On page 15 of Applicant's response,

Applicant submits that "a 'forecast series' is defined in the Application as 'a set of parameters defining attributes of forecasts that can be created from the forecast series.'" Again, Sultan's users specify the constraints that they wish to apply to a forecast. These forecast constraints are "a set of parameters defining attributes of forecasts that can be created from the forecast series"; therefore, they are a "forecast series," as per Applicant's own cited definition.

Applicant further asserts that "mere use of a computer system does not mean that generation of a forecast occurs automatically." (Page 16 of Applicant's response) The Examiner respectfully disagrees. Merriam Webster's Collegiate® Dictionary (10th ed) defines *automatic* as "done or produced as if by machine." Since Sultan uses a computer to manage forecast series and generate its forecasts, Sultan does so automatically (i.e., done or produced by the computer).

On page 16 of Applicant's response, "Applicants further submit that Sultan provides no disclosure of an identified date and time to generate a forecast, again because Sultan only contemplates real-time forecasts...Applicants respectfully submit that such an 'understanding' ['that the forecast is to be generated at the present date and time'] does not amount to identifying a date and time to generate a forecast, and having that identified date and time included in the generated forecast series, as required by the independent claims." The Examiner submits that the limitation is question is so broad that many interpretations may be made. Regarding the limitation, "identify a date and time to generate a forecast," in col. 2, lines 35-37 and col. 3, lines 60-64, Sultan teaches that a sales forecast over a "selected time period" or "specified

period of time" is generated. In other words, this limitation could refer to the date and time period that is subjected to the forecast. For example, a user desires the forecast to predict sales for May 1, 2007 (which implies any sales made between the hours of 12:00 am and 11:59 pm). Alternatively, the limitation in question could be interpreted as referring to the date and time at which the forecast is to be run. For example, a user wants to execute a forecast right now (which implies the current date and current time). The act of "identifying" a date and time does not require an explicit selection or entry by a user of a specific date and a specific time. Instead, if the computer programmed with software has enough instruction to know when to run a forecast (e.g., run the forecast now) or what time period a forecast is set to analyze (e.g., predict sales for May 1, 2007), then the instructions set up for a specific forecast (i.e., a forecast series) do require an understanding of desired date and time in order to properly execute the instructions.

Also, Examiner notes that, as per MPEP § 2144.03(C), the statements of Official Notice made in the art rejection have been established as admitted prior art since Applicant has not traversed the Examiner's assertions of Official Notice. More specifically, the following statements of Official Notice are now formally established on record as admitted prior art:

Official Notice is taken that it was old and well-known in the art of data reporting at the time of Applicant's invention to prevent modification of data once it has been formally submitted to a higher authority. Such a practice helps to ensure the integrity of

data by encouraging people to check the accuracy of data before it is officially submitted to a higher authority.

Official Notice is taken that it was old and well-known in the art of forecasting to forecast sales over a period of a certain number of days. Considering that most retail locations open and close shop daily, by aggregating forecasts for such retail locations over the course of x number of days, forecasts are aggregated based on a daily frequency.

Official Notice is taken that it was old and well-known in the art of forecasting to request any missing data that is needed to complete the forecast. This practice is utilized to retrieve any data that is needed to timely complete a forecast.

Official Notice is taken that it was old and well-known in the art of Internet/web page programming to utilize HTML to program Internet/web pages. HTML is a very commonly used programming language due to its compatibility with various platforms and relative ease of programming.

Official Notice is taken that it was old and well-known in the art of data reporting at the time of Applicant's invention for a superior and/or a system administrator to return a collection of data to a data source for correction of the data. This practice allows for efficient collaboration on data collection for data analysis and reporting purposes.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4.   The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by
another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent
granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the
applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section
351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States.
only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2)
of such treaty in the English language.

5.   Claims 1-3, 12, 45-48, and 50 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being

anticipated by Sultan (U.S. Patent No. 6,804,657).

Sultan discloses a computer system comprising:

[Claim 1]   a processor (Fig. 3);

a memory, coupled to the processor, and storing instructions executable on the

processor (Fig. 3), the instructions comprising:

a forecast series creation set of instructions to:

identify hierarchy data defining a hierarchy structure of an organization, including

data identifying a hierarchical position of each member of the organization (col. 2, lines

19-21; col. 11, lines 9-26);

identify a date and time to generate a forecast (col. 2, lines 35-37; col. 3, lines

60-64 -- A sales forecast over a selected time period is generated. A time period

implies a date and time. Alternatively, if a user requests a forecast in "real-time," as

disclosed by Sultan, it is understood that the forecast is to be generated at the present

date and time);

identify members of the organization to be included in the forecast, the members

derived from the hierarchy (col. 11, lines 9-67; col. 12, lines 1-11 -- A regional manager

may view a forecast by rolling up the forecast information of all those directly or

indirectly reporting to him and a Division Head may generate a forecast of those

reporting to him and the CEO can do the same by entering parameters. The database

310 is accessed and a forecast is generated corresponding to the parameters entered

by aggregating the stored forecast information);

identify forecast data to be automatically analyzed to generate the forecast (Fig.

4; col. 11, lines 9-67; col. 12, lines 1-11 -- The forecast is generated using a computer

system, i.e., automatically);

identify a visibility mode for the forecast (col. 2, lines 60-64; col. 5, lines 15-24);

and

generate a forecast series comprising the identified hierarchy data, the identified

date and time to generate the forecast, the identity of the members of the organization

to be included in the forecast, the identity of the forecast data to be automatically

analyzed, and the identified visibility model (col. 2, lines 19-21, 35-37, 60-64; col. 3,

lines 60-64; col. 5, lines 15-24; col. 11, lines 9-67; col. 12, lines 1-11 -- Forecasts are

associated with the recited data);

an opportunity and revenue scheduling creation set of instructions to identify

forecast data (col. 2, lines 19-21, 35-37, 60-64; col. 3, lines 60-64; col. 5, lines 15-24,

46-58; col. 6, lines 27-48; col. 11, lines 9-67; col. 12, lines 1-11 -- Forecasts are

associated with the recited data, which include predicted sales data in terms of a

selected currency amount); and

a forecast creation set of instructions to generate the forecast using the forecast

series (col. 2, lines 19-21, 35-37, 60-64; col. 3, lines 60-64; col. 5, lines 15-24, 46-58;

col. 6, lines 27-48; col. 11, lines 9-67; col. 12, lines 1-11 -- Forecasts are associated

with the recited data. The final forecast and access thereto is defined by the forecast

series data);

[Claim 2]   wherein the hierarchy structure comprises a plurality of management

levels, the forecast series creation set of instructions further comprises instructions to:

      define visibility rules that specify the forecast data that are visible to each

management level of the organization to be stored on the storage device, and include

the visibility rules in the forecast series (col. 2, lines 60-64; col. 5, lines 15-24), and

      the forecast creation set of instructions further comprises instructions to generate

a forecast for any management level of the organization, wherein each forecast that is

generated is based on forecast data that are visible to the management level for which

that forecast corresponds as specified by the visibility rules (col. 2, lines 60-64; col. 5,

lines 15-24; col. 7, lines 44-52 -- "The entered pipeline and sales information, however,

should not be universally accessible by all members of the sales organization. For

example, the member of the sales force occupying the Sales Manager position B11

should have access to the pipeline and forecast sales information entered and/or

modified by his or her hierarchically-lower Account Supervisors B111, B112 and B113

and entered by those Account representatives (e.g., B1121-B1125, among others) that

report to him"; col. 11, lines 9-26 -- The Regional Manager may view pipeline or forecast

information by rolling up the pipeline or forecast information for all those directly or

indirectly reporting to him. Subsequently Division Managers and CEOs can perform the

same task);

[Claim 3]   wherein a forecast is generated for a manager (col. 7, lines 12-25 -- A

manager can modify forecast data to be used in generation of a forecast; col. 11, lines

9-30 -- Various levels of managers can request forecast generation), and

the visibility rules include a maximum hierarchy depth search value n defining a

search scope such that the forecast generated for the manager is generated from the

manager's own forecast data and from forecast data corresponding to members of the

organization who are defined to be both subordinate to the manager and occupy a

management level in the hierarchy that is <=n levels below a management level

occupied by the manager (col. 7, lines 5-64 -- "Sales Manager position B11 should have

access to the pipeline and forecast sales information entered and/or modified by his or

her hierarchically-lower Account Supervisors B111, B112 and B113 and entered by

those Account representatives (e.g., B1121-B1125, among others) that report to him.

However, the Sales Manager B11 may have no reason to access either pipeline or

forecast information from Sales Managers B12, B13 (even though B12 and B13 belong

to the same Division as B11) or that of any other Sales Manager or any hierarchically

higher Regional manager, Division Head or CEO. To restrict access to the pipeline

and/or forecast information, the assigned permission levels are used. In general, the

permission levels for accessing pipeline and/or forecast information matches a sales

force member's hierarchical position within the sales organization, unless such sales

force member belongs to an "overlay organization" that participates in the opportunity

and has permission to add information to it, but does not "own" the corresponding

forecast. The maximum depth as indicated by this rule would equal the total number of

levels below the member with respect to hierarchy).

Sultan discloses a computer system comprising:

[Claim 12]   a processor (Fig. 3);

a memory, coupled to the processor, and storing instructions executable on the

processor (Fig. 3), the instructions comprising:

a forecast series creation set of instructions comprising instructions to:

identify hierarchy data defining members of an organization and a hierarchical

position of each member of the organization (col. 2, lines 19-21; col. 11, lines 9-26);

determine an identity of a current forecast participant who is a member of the

organization (col. 2, lines 60-64; col. 5, lines 15-24; col. 6, lines 20-26 -- Access to the

system is controlled; therefore, the system keeps track of who accesses, inputs, and

views data);

identify members of the organization who are subordinate to the current forecast

participant based on the hierarchy data (col. 2, lines 19-21; col. 11, lines 9-26);

identify a date and time to generate a forecast (col. 2, lines 35-37; col. 3, lines

60-64 -- A sales forecast over a selected time period is generated. A time period

implies a date and time. Alternatively, if a user requests a forecast in "real-time," as

disclosed by Sultan, it is understood that the forecast is to be generated at the present

date and time);

identify members of the organization to be included in the forecast, the members

derived from the hierarchy (col. 11, lines 9-67; col. 12, lines 1-11 -- A regional manager

may view a forecast by rolling up the forecast information of all those directly or

indirectly reporting to him and a Division Head may generate a forecast of those

reporting to him and the CEO can do the same by entering parameters. The database

310 is accessed and a forecast is generated corresponding to the parameters entered

by aggregating the stored forecast information);

identify forecast data to be automatically analyzed to generate the forecast (Fig.

4; col. 11, lines 9-67; col. 12, lines 1-11 -- The forecast is generated using a computer

system, i.e., automatically);

identify a visibility mode for the forecast (col. 2, lines 60-64; col. 5, lines 15-24);

and

generate a forecast series comprising the identified hierarchy data, the identity of

the current forecast participant, the identity of members of the organization who are

subordinate to the current forecast participant, the date and time to generate the

forecast, the identity of the members of the organization to be included in the forecast,

the identity of the forecast data to be automatically analyzed, and the identified visibility

model (col. 2, lines 19-21, 35-37, 60-64; col. 3, lines 60-64; col. 5, lines 15-24; col. 6,

lines 20-26; col. 11, lines 9-67; col. 12, lines 1-11 -- Forecasts are associated with the

recited data);

an opportunity and revenue scheduling creation set of instructions comprising

instructions to identify forecast data corresponding to the members of the organization

(col. 2, lines 19-21, 35-37, 60-64; col. 3, lines 60-64; col. 5, lines 15-24, 46-58; col. 6, lines 27-48; col. 11, lines 9-67; col. 12, lines 1-11 -- Forecasts are associated with the recited data, which include predicted sales data in terms of a selected currency amount); and

a forecast creation set of instructions comprising instructions to generate the forecast, using the forecast series (col. 2, lines 19-21, 35-37, 60-64; col. 3, lines 60-64; col. 5, lines 15-24, 46-58; col. 6, lines 27-48; col. 11, lines 9-67; col. 12, lines 1-11 -- Forecasts are associated with the recited data. The final forecast and access thereto is defined by the forecast series data); and

a forecast creation set of instructions comprising instructions to generate forecasts for one or more members of the organization who are identified as being subordinate to the current forecast participant, using the forecast series (col. 2, lines 19-21, 35-37, 60-64; col. 3, lines 60-64; col. 5, lines 15-24, 46-58; col. 6, lines 27-48; col. 11, lines 9-67; col. 12, lines 1-11 -- Forecasts are associated with the recited data. The final forecast and access thereto is defined by the forecast series data); and

present forecast data to the current forecast participant (col. 8, line 56 through col. 12, line 29).

[Claims 45-48, 50] Claims 45-48 and 50 recite limitations already addressed by the rejection of claims 1-3 and 12 above; therefore, the same rejection applies.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6.   The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all

obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set
> forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and
> the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the
> invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains.
> Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

7.   Claims 5, 6, 13-17, 19-21, 28-30, and 49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as

being unpatentable over Sultan (U.S. Patent No. 6,804,657), as applied to claims 1 and

12 above.

[Claims 5, 6] As per claim 5, Sultan discloses that the opportunity and revenue

scheduling creation set of instructions further comprises instructions to enable a

member of the organization to submit a forecast to a superior (col. 7, lines 5-37; col. 8,

lines 56-30); however, Sultan does not expressly teach that the member is prevented

from modifying the forecast after it has been submitted. Official Notice is taken that it

was old and well-known in the art of data reporting at the time of Applicant's invention to

prevent modification of data once it has been formally submitted to a higher authority.

Such a practice helps to ensure the integrity of data by encouraging people to check the

accuracy of data before it is officially submitted to a higher authority. Since Sultan's

managers rely on the accuracy of their forecasts in order to make global sales forecasts

for a multi-national company (col. 3, lines 42-45), the Examiner submits that it would

have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention

to modify Sultan such that the member of the organization (submitting a forecast) is

prevented from modifying the forecast after it has been submitted (to a superior) in

order to help ensure the integrity of data by encouraging members to check the accuracy of data before it is officially submitted to a higher authority, thereby improving the likelihood that the aggregated forecasts will yield more accurate global sales forecasts.

Regarding claim 6, Sultan discloses that the forecast creation set of instructions further comprises instructions to present forecast data in a graphical format that enables a member to compare forecast data corresponding to related forecasts over time that are specified to be visible to that member (col. 6, lines 4-26 -- Members of the sales force may be granted access to information stored in the database. This information may be viewed via the Internet; col. 11, lines 9-12: "Regional Manager B3 may view a pipeline and/or a forecast by rolling up (summing) the pipeline and/or forecast information of all those directly or indirectly reporting to him." The pipeline contains multiple forecasts that are viewed simultaneously. The information is graphical as depicted in Figure 3: Forecast Summary by Product).

[Claim 49]   Sultan discloses that the date and time to generate a forecast comprises:

a base period identifying a period over which forecast items are aggregated (col. 8, line 56 through col. 9, line 1);

a start period identifying the earliest date for which the forecast can be generated (col. 8, line 56 through col. 9, line 1 -- By specifying a future time period over which sales are forecasted, the beginning of the time period is the "start period identifying the earliest date for which the forecast can be generated").

Regarding claim 49, Sultan does not expressly disclose an interval period

identifying a frequency at which forecasts are made within the base period; however,

Sultan does aggregate sales forecasts for a specific period of time (col. 8, lines 63-66).

Official Notice is taken that it was old and well-known in the art of forecasting to forecast

sales over a period of a certain number of days. Considering that most retail locations

open and close shop daily, by aggregating forecasts for such retail locations over the

course of x number of days, forecasts are aggregated based on a daily frequency.

Since Sultan's sales forecasts may be utilized to predict global sales for a multi-national

company (col. 3, lines 42-45) and many retail locations open and close shop daily, the

Examiner submits that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at

the time of Applicant's invention to modify Sultan's forecast date and time to include an

interval period identifying a frequency at which forecasts are made within the base

period in order to account for the common hours of operation of many retail locations

(e.g., opening and closing daily), thereby assisting in aggregating forecasts

corresponding to multiple days of operation of a retail location.

[Claims 13, 14]   Sultan discloses that the current forecast participant is a manager

whose forecast is determined, at least in part, on forecasts that are submitted by one or

more selected members of the organization who are subordinate to the manager (col. 2,

lines 1-5; col. 8, line 56 through col. 12, line 29) and the forecast creation set of

instructions further comprises instructions to generate a forecast for the manager based

on a combination of forecasts submitted by said one or more selected members and

any forecast that is automatically generated (col. 2, lines 1-5; col. 8, line 56 through col.

12, line 29). Sultan does not expressly teach the step of automatically generating a

forecast for any member among said one or more selected members who has yet to

submit a forecast (claim 13), wherein the forecast creation set of instructions further

comprises instructions to automatically calculate forecasts for said one or more selected

members of the organization who are subordinate to the manager and have not

submitted their forecast in a recursive manner from lower levels to higher levels in the

organization's hierarchy, wherein the manager occupies at least a second level of

management in the organization's hierarchy (claim 14). Sultan does allow managers to

alter forecast data entered by their sales people (col. 7, lines 5-43); therefore, Sultan

envisions the capability of refining forecast data as needed. Additionally, Official Notice

is taken that it was old and well-known in the art of forecasting to request any missing

data that is needed to complete the forecast. This practice is utilized to retrieve any

data that is needed to timely complete a forecast. Since Sultan's global sales forecasts

are dependent on forecast data received from sales people, the Examiner submits that

it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's

invention to modify Sultan to perform the step of automatically generating a forecast for

any member among said one or more selected members who has yet to submit a

forecast (claim 13) in order to facilitate the generation of complete and accurate global

sales forecasts in a timely manner. Additionally, Sultan's higher level forecasts rely on

the forecast data received from sales people who are part of the lower levels of the

organization's hierarchy.   Therefore, the Examiner further submits that it would have

been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to

modify Sultan such that the forecast set of instructions further comprises instructions to

automatically calculate forecasts for said one or more selected members of the

organization who are subordinate to the manager and have not submitted their forecast

in a recursive manner from lower levels to higher levels in the organization's hierarchy,

wherein the manager occupies at least a second level of management in the

organization's hierarchy (claim 14) in order to more timely gather information in an order

that reflects the order in which forecasted data sets are needed (i.e., higher level

forecasts are based on data provided by members of the lower levels of the

organizational hierarchy).

Sultan discloses a system comprising:

[Claim 15]   a processor (Fig. 3);

a memory, coupled to the processor, and storing instructions executable on the

processor (Fig. 3), the instructions comprising:

a forecast series creation set of instructions to:

identify hierarchy data defining a hierarchy structure of an organization, including

data identifying a hierarchical position of each member of the organization (col. 2, lines

19-21; col. 11, lines 9-26);

identify rules that specify forecast data that are visible to each member of the

organization (col. 2, lines 60-64; col. 5, lines 15-24);

identify a date and time to generate a forecast (col. 2, lines 35-37; col. 3, lines

60-64 -- A sales forecast over a selected time period is generated. A time period

implies a date and time. Alternatively, if a user requests a forecast in "real-time," as

disclosed by Sultan, it is understood that the forecast is to be generated at the present

date and time);

identify members of the organization to be included in the forecast, the members

derived from the hierarchy (col. 11, lines 9-67; col. 12, lines 1-11 -- A regional manager

may view a forecast by rolling up the forecast information of all those directly or

indirectly reporting to him and a Division Head may generate a forecast of those

reporting to him and the CEO can do the same by entering parameters. The database

310 is accessed and a forecast is generated corresponding to the parameters entered

by aggregating the stored forecast information);

identify forecast data to be automatically analyzed to generate the forecast (Fig.

4; col. 11, lines 9-67; col. 12, lines 1-11 -- The forecast is generated using a computer

system, i.e., automatically);

identify a visibility mode for the forecast (col. 2, lines 60-64; col. 5, lines 15-24);

and

generate a forecast series comprising the identified hierarchy data, the identified

rules, the date and time to generate a forecast, the identity of the members of the

organization to be included in the forecast, the identity of the forecast data to be

automatically analyzed, and the identified visibility model (col. 2, lines 19-21, 35-37, 60-

64; col. 3, lines 60-64; col. 5, lines 15-24; col. 11, lines 9-67; col. 12, lines 1-11 --

Forecasts are associated with the recited data);

an opportunity and revenue scheduling creation set of instructions to send data

comprising a set of interactive components via a computer network to a client, a portion

of which enable forecast data corresponding to members of the organization to be

entered via the client (col. 2; lines 19-21, 35-37, 60-64; col. 3, lines 60-64; col. 5, lines

15-24, 46-58; col. 6, lines 4-48; col. 11, lines 9-67; col. 12, lines 1-11 -- Forecasts are

associated with the recited data, which include predicted sales data in terms of a

selected currency amount); and

a forecast creation set of instructions to generate a forecast for members of the

organization using the forecast series, wherein each forecast is generated based on

forecast data that are visible to corresponding members according to visibility rules, and

send forecast data corresponding to the forecast to the client to be viewed by a user

through use of the set of interactive components (col. 2, lines 19-21, 35-37, 60-64; col.

3, lines 60-64; col. 5, lines 15-24, 46-58; col. 6, lines 4-48; col. 11, lines 9-67; col. 12,

lines 1-11 -- Forecasts are associated with the recited data. The final forecast and

access thereto is defined by the forecast series data);

[Claim 16]   wherein the hierarchy structure comprises a plurality of management

levels, the forecast series creation set of instructions further comprises instructions to:

define visibility rules that specify the forecast data that are visible to each

management level of the organization (col. 2, lines 60-64; col. 5, lines 15-24), and

include the visibility rules in the forecast series (col. 2, lines 60-64; col. 5, lines 15-24), and

the forecast creation set of instructions further comprises instructions to generate a forecast for any management level of the organization, wherein each forecast that is generated is based on forecast data that are visible to the management level for which that forecast corresponds as specified by the visibility rules (col. 2, lines 60-64; col. 5, lines 15-24; col. 7, lines 44-52 -- "The entered pipeline and sales information, however, should not be universally accessible by all members of the sales organization. For example, the member of the sales force occupying the Sales Manager position B11 should have access to the pipeline and forecast sales information entered and/or modified by his or her hierarchically-lower Account Supervisors B111, B112 and B113 and entered by those Account representatives (e.g., B1121-B1125, among others) that report to him"; col. 11, lines 9-26 -- The Regional Manager may view pipeline or forecast information by rolling up the pipeline or forecast information for all those directly or indirectly reporting to him. Subsequently Division Managers and CEOs can perform the same task);

[Claim 17]   wherein a forecast is generated for a manager (col. 7, lines 12-25 -- A manager can modify forecast data to be used in generation of a forecast; col. 11, lines 9-30 -- Various levels of managers can request forecast generation), and

the visibility rules include a maximum hierarchy depth search value n defining a search scope such that the forecast generated for the manager is generated from the manager's own forecast data and from forecast data corresponding to members of the

organization who are defined to be both subordinate to the manager and occupy a

management level in the hierarchy that is <=n levels below a management level

occupied by the manager (col. 7, lines 5-64 -- "Sales Manager position B11 should have

access to the pipeline and forecast sales information entered and/or modified by his or

her hierarchically-lower Account Supervisors B111, B112 and B113 and entered by

those Account representatives (e.g., B1121-B1125, among others) that report to him.

However, the Sales Manager B11 may have no reason to access either pipeline or

forecast information from Sales Managers B12, B13 (even though B12 and B13 belong

to the same Division as B11) or that of any other Sales Manager or any hierarchically

higher Regional manager, Division Head or CEO. To restrict access to the pipeline

and/or forecast information, the assigned permission levels are used. In general, the

permission levels for access pipeline and/or forecast information matches a sales force

member's hierarchical position within the sales organization, unless such sales force

member belongs to an "overlay organization" that participates in the opportunity and has

permission to add information to it, but does not "own" the corresponding forecast. The

maximum depth as indicated by this rule would equal the total number of levels below

the member with respect to hierarchy);

[Claim 21]   wherein the forecast creation set of instructions further comprises

instructions to send data to the client, and the interactive components are configured to

present the forecast data in a graphical format that enables a member to compare

forecast data corresponding to related forecasts over time that are specified to be

visible to that member (col. 6, lines 4-26 -- Members of the sales force may be granted

access to information stored in the database. This information may be viewed via the Internet; col. 11, lines 9-12: "Regional Manager B3 may view a pipeline and/or a forecast by rolling up (summing) the pipeline and/or forecast information of all those directly or indirectly reporting to him." The pipeline contains multiple forecasts that are viewed simultaneously. The information is graphical as depicted in Figure 3: Forecast Summary by Product).

As per claims 15 and 21, Sultan discloses that an interface may be provided via the Internet to input and view forecast data (col. 6, lines 4-26), yet Sultan does not expressly teach that the Internet interface is programmed using HTML components. However, Official Notice is taken that it was old and well-known in the art of Internet/web page programming to utilize HTML to program Internet/web pages. HTML is a very commonly used programming language due to its compatibility with various platforms and relative ease of programming. Since Sultan discloses the use of an Internet-based interface, the Examiner submits that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to program Sultan's Internet-based interface using HTML since HTML is a very commonly used programming language due to its compatibility with various platforms and relative ease of programming, thereby making Sultan's interface widely accessible.

[Claim 19]   Claim 19 recites limitations already addressed by the rejection of claim 5 above; therefore, the same rejection applies.

[Claim 20]   Sultan does not expressly teach that the forecast creation set of instructions further comprises instructions to enable one or more of the superior to which the forecast was submitted and a system administrator to unsubmit the forecast such that the member who submitted that forecast is enabled to modify the forecast. However, Official Notice is taken that it was old and well-known in the art of data reporting at the time of Applicant's invention for a superior and/or a system administrator to return a collection of data to a data source for correction of the data. This practice allows for efficient collaboration on data collection for data analysis and reporting purposes. Since Sultan's global sales forecasts rely on the provision of accurate sales forecasts from individual sales people, the Examiner submits that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to modify Sultan such that the forecast creation set of instructions further comprises instructions to enable one or more of the superior to which the forecast was submitted and a system administrator to unsubmit the forecast such that the member who submitted that forecast is enabled to modify the forecast in order to facilitate efficient collaboration on data collection for data analysis and reporting purposes, thereby encouraging collection of the most accurate forecast data possible.

[Claims 28-30]   Claims 28-30 recite limitations already addressed by the rejection of claims 1-3, 5, 6, 12-17, and 19-21 above; therefore, the same rejection applies.

Conclusion

8.   **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time

policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE

MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within

TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not

mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the

shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any

extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later

than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

9.   Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the

examiner should be directed to Susanna M. Diaz whose telephone number is (571) 272-

6733. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 8 am - 4:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's

supervisor, James Trammell can be reached on (571) 272-6712. The fax phone

number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-

273-8300.

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USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information

system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Susanna M. Diaz
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3694

April 18, 2007